

CHILD PLACEMENT REVIEW BOARD
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of the State of Delaware



ANNUAL REPORT

FY2006

(July 2005-June 2006)

820 North French Street • Wilmington, DE 19801 • (302) 577-8750

The Child Placement Review Board (CPRB) was established to further the best interests of children who are in the care and custody of a placement agency through the intervention of the State, whether that intervention takes the form of foster care or adjudication under the Family Court system.

The Child Placement Review Board is an independent, citizen-based agency that has established Review Committees in each of Delaware's three counties. This year, the CPRB held 874 reviews. The Review Committees bring citizens of diverse backgrounds and perspectives to focus on the needs of individual children. Through the mechanism of regular, independent reviews, the State of Delaware seeks to foster permanency and emphasize provision of necessary services, education, and preparation for independent living.



The CPRB works with the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families (DSCYF) through three of its agencies: the Division of Family Services (DFS), the Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services (YRS), and the Division of Child Mental Health (CMH). The Review Committees of the CPRB conduct three kinds of reviews:

- DFS reviews address the needs of children in the care and/or custody of DFS; these children are generally in foster homes, although some of these children also receive services through CMH and YRS. This year, 790 DFS reviews were held for 715 individual children.
- YRS reviews cover young people who have been remanded to the care and/or custody of YRS by Family Court and placed in alternative placements or out-of-home care but who are not in detention or incarceration facilities. During FY2006, the CPRB conducted 64 YRS reviews.
- Mixing reviews are designed to assess situations in which adjudicated youth are housed with non-adjudicated youth in common settings. The purpose of these reviews is to ensure that the non-adjudicated youth are not placed at risk by this arrangement. This year, 20 mixing reviews were held.

In addition to conducting independent reviews, the CPRB works as an advocate for children, furthering the work of family support and adoption groups as well as other agencies whose work improves the safety, stability, and well-being of Delaware's children.

Review Committees believe that their work continues to have a positive effect on children in foster care, adjudicated youth who receive CPRB reviews, and children who are considered in mixing reviews. One major advantage of CPRB reviews is the fact that a mix of citizens makes up each Review Committee. By bringing different backgrounds and offering different perspectives, Review Committee members are able to emphasize positive approaches, advocate for specific solutions and recommendations, and focus on the child's well-being and best interests.

Training has been a continuing area of emphasis for all CPRB members, with more attention given to the standard review format to ensure that no area of concern is overlooked in a review. In addition, topic-based training has offered Review Committee members training on drug and alcohol treatment options and the needs of sex offenders. The CPRB Annual Meeting includes a training module; this is the basic training for every CPRB member each year. New members receive in-depth orientation before they are assigned to a Review Committee, and they receive ongoing mentoring from other members of their Review Committees. Special training is also provided for the Presiding Officers of the Review Committees. In all, CPRB members engaged in more than 400 hours of training in FY2006, an increase of approximately 100 hours over FY2005.

CPRB brochures on volunteering and on educational programs have been translated into Spanish to make them accessible to more members of the public.

Education is critical to the long-term success of those who have been in foster care. The CPRB is proud to administer the Ivyane D.F. Davis Scholarship and partner with



DFS to administer the federal Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV) programs. This year, 38 scholarship awards were made to young people who had spent at least one year in Delaware's foster care system. The Ivyane D.F. Davis Scholarship awards totaled \$32,560; this fund also furnished matching funds for the ETV program in the amount of \$17,040. The ETV program awards totaled \$88,576.

The ETV funds are allocated to DFS as part of the federal program. This partnership between DFS and the

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CPRB ensures that the Davis Scholarship funds and ETV funds are used to maximum benefit and flexibility. One example of this is the 18 students who attended Delaware Technical and Community College: with the combined funding options, these students received tuition funding as well as assistance with indirect costs such as room and board. This flexibility allows more students to take advantage of a two-year college option, which is often a good match for those aging out of foster care and equips them with marketable skills in a manageable time frame.



Among this year's award recipients, one student graduated from Temple University *magna cum laude*. Eighteen recipients attended Delaware Technical and Community College, six went to Delaware State University, and one to the University of Delaware. Seven students attended out-of-state colleges or universities. Four recipients attended post-secondary trade or vocational schools, and one received support for a vocational licensing fee.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER AGENCIES

The CPRB works collaboratively with other community-based groups and additional State agencies, focusing its outreach efforts on supporting adoption and other paths to permanency for children in foster care.

Collaborative efforts include those with the Child Protection and Accountability Commission (CPAC), including seven CPAC subcommittees or workgroups, and the Interagency Committee on Adoption. In addition, the Executive Director of the CPRB serves as the Chair of the DFS Advisory and Advocacy Council, sits on the CMH Council, and participates with the Delaware Coalition for Youth. One product of these collaborative efforts this year was support for the DFS efforts with the State's Department of Education to implement federal educational access laws. Children in foster care are now allowed to finish the term or semester in their current schools even if a foster-care placement moves them into a different school district.

In working with Family Court, the CPRB appreciates the efforts invested in removing barriers to services for children in foster care. The CPRB sees its role as monitoring progress toward achieving the court-ordered program for children in care and emphasizing the need for permanency.

SCOPE OF WORK: FY2006 REVIEWS

DFS reviews. During FY2006, DFS had 1,469 children in foster care. Of these, the Review Committees of the CPRB completed 790 reviews of 715 children. Three hundred twenty-four children exited foster care before they were eligible for a review, and 430 children in care had not been in care long enough to be eligible for a CPRB review.

Geographical distribution of children reviewed was as follows: 423 in New Castle County, 146 in Kent County, and 146 in Sussex County.

Slightly more than half the children in foster care (53%) were placed in foster care homes. This was the predominant placement, with *de facto* placement (14%) and specialized foster placement (9%) being the next most populous categories.

Each child in care is assigned a permanency goal. In FY2006, 37% of the children in care were classified as having a permanency goal of alternative planned permanent living arrangement or independence (APPLA), which is defined as maintaining a child in foster care on a permanent basis until he or she ages out of the system as an independent adult at the age of 18 or when high school graduation is achieved. The Return Home category, the goal for 33% of those in foster care, shows a rising trend emphasizing reunification. The next most populous category is Termination of Parental Rights/Adoption, which recognizes that the child's home will never be a safe haven and that the best course of action is legal termination of the parents' rights and the adoption of the child by other adults.

The percentage of children assigned to the APPLA category has been fairly consistent over the last three years. There has been a reduction in the number of children classified as appropriate for the termination of parental rights and adoption and an increase in those targeted for a return to their homes. All placement categories are shown in the chart below.

Permanency Goal for Children Reviewed by CPRB

DFS Goal	FY2006	FY2005	FY2004
APPLA/Independence	37%	39%	37%
Return Home	33%	28%	24%
TPR/Adoption	25%	28%	34%
Guardianship	3%	3%	3%
Relative Custody	2%	2%	2%
Unclear	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

The issue with APPLA placements is that it carries the reality of long periods spent in foster care. This can be a stable arrangement in which a child knows security for

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the first time, or it can mean being moved from one foster home to another. The chart below shows the number of placements experienced by children who were reviewed this year; that is, how many foster homes, group homes, or other facilities the child had been placed in during the course of his or her time in foster care. In each of the last three years, approximately one fifth of the children in foster care had experienced 5-9 placements. Although placement changes can hinge on many causes and are not unique to children classified as having APPLA as a goal, this large number of placements throughout the foster care system is a cause for concern. The lack of stability that goes with multiple placements creates a burden on the child and raises concerns for the child's future.

Number of Placements for Children Reviewed by CPRB

Placements	FY2006	FY2005	FY2004
1	19%	15%	17%
2	18%	21%	18%
3	12%	12%	15%
4	10%	10%	9%
5-9	21%	21%	22%
10-14	9%	9%	9%
15-19	4%	5%	4%
20-24	4%	3%	3%
25-42	3%	4%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%

YRS reviews. During FY2006, the CPRB reviewed 64 cases of adjudicated youth in alternative placements or out-of-home care. These young people are not in detention or incarceration facilities.

Placements for these youth focus on the problems that brought them into the judicial process in the first place, and 90% of them are remanded to treatment for sex offenses or behavior management, as shown on the chart below.

Type of Placement for YRS Cases

Placement	FY2006	FY2005	FY2004
Sex Offender Treatment	55%	33%	44%
Behavior Management	35%	55%	51%
Transitional Living	5%	1%	1%
Specialized Foster Care	3%	8%	4%
Chemical Dependency	2%	0%	0%
Mental Health	0%	3%	0%
Totals	100%	100%	100%

Delaware continues to be the site for treatment of less than 15% of the reviewed YRS cases. Finding appropriate programs in states close to Delaware is one way to enhance family visitation, improve exposure to

counseling, and upgrade caseworker oversight. Placements for YRS cases under review for the last three years are given below.



State of Placement for YRS Cases

State of Placement	FY2006	FY2005	FY2004
Pennsylvania	25%	36%	32%
South Carolina	22%	23%	22%
Delaware	11%	8%	14%
Virginia	14%	10%	3%
South Dakota	9%	13%	6%
Indiana	5%	None	None
Minnesota	5%	None	4%
Florida	3%	3%	3%
Iowa	2%	4%	10%
Maryland	2%	None	None
Tennessee	2%	3%	None
North Dakota	None	None	3%
Utah	None	None	3%
Totals	100%	100%	100%

Of the YRS cases reviewed, 7 were female and 57 male. Among the females, all were African-American. Among the males, 66% were African-American, 30% were Caucasian, and 4% were Latino. A review of age distribution shows that females cluster in the 16-to-17 age range, while males enter the YRS system in significant numbers earlier (age 15), with concentrations in the 15-to-17 age range.

Age	Female YRS Youth	Male YRS Youth
13	0	1
14	0	3
15	0	16
16	3	15
17	3	11
18	1	6
19 and above	0	5
Total	7	57

Mixing reviews. When adjudicated youth and/or those charged with felonies enter a placement in which non-adjudicated youth also reside, initial reviews are given by a senior administrator from DSCYF or YRS and a Family Court officer. The first CPRB review is conducted when the YRS youth has been in the placement for two months; subsequent CPRB reviews occur annually when or if the youth is eligible for a regular DFS or YRS review. This year, 20 mixing reviews were conducted by CPRB.

AREAS OF CONCERN

CPRB reviews are set up to include all parties with an interest or responsibility in a child's long-term care and development. Review Committees have developed several concerns in the course of FY2006. The Executive Committee of the CPRB, in its role as an advocate for children, presents these issues in an effort to encourage broad and collegial efforts to finding effective solutions.

Long-term foster-care placements. Thirty-seven percent of the children under the supervision of DFS are categorized as having a goal of alternative planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA) or independence. The APPLA designation means that DFS has concluded that the best outcome for a given child is a long-term foster care setting.

The concerns raised by Review Committee members, and echoed by the Executive Committee, center around the possibility that APPLA is an over-used permanency goal that often does not result in stable long-term placements. Greater effort should be focused on identifying and resolving the issues that prevent successful connections and permanent placement for a child.

Reduced frequency of CPRB reviews. At one time, statutory requirements called for independent CPRB reviews every six months. This approach has been replaced by a schedule requiring no less than one CPRB review annually, plus additional reviews by Family Court. The result is that Family Court now has a far greater number of hearings than the original Court Improvement Project called for and is developing a growing backlog. At the same time, the workload on DFS has increased because of added Family Court appearances, so caseworkers have less time to address the issues that are very rightly raised by Family Court.

The improved coordination between Family Court and the CPRB that was one of the goals of the new process has not materialized. The CPRB is concerned that issues raised in its reviews often do not receive timely follow-up when the interval before its next review is so substantial; the CPRB urges Family Court to utilize these reports more fully.

Altered attendance patterns at reviews. Members of Review Committees from all three counties have noted the increasing rarity of children in attendance at their own reviews. In addition, many foster parents are irregular in attending reviews for the children in their care. The concern is that decisions for children may be made without adequate input from the child or foster parents, resulting in decisions that are made without a real sense of the child's health and well-being.



A positive example of the benefit of including children at their own reviews is offered by the Murphey School, which has been conscientious about including both foster children and house parents in reviews.

Court appointed special advocates (CASAs) have become a valuable part of the foster care picture, but attendance by CASAs at CPRB reviews has dropped during the last year. When a CASA is not at a CPRB review, a valuable source of insight is missing, and the child is the loser in this situation. In contrast, the Office of the Child Advocate has emphasized the importance of having the guardians ad litem attend CPRB reviews; this has been a welcome addition.

Out-of-state placements for adjudicated youth. The ongoing use of out-of-state placements for adjudicated youth who are under the supervision of YRS indicates that the continuum of services needed by these youth is not yet available within Delaware.

In FY 2006, only 7 of the 64 YRS cases under review were housed in Delaware. Thus, Delaware is paying other states to house and address the needs of these youth. However, simply returning them to Delaware without having programs that meet their needs is a disservice.

By developing programming in behavior management (needed in 36% of cases), Delaware could keep more than a third of its Level 3 and Level 4 adjudicated youth in-state, which would allow for more consistent family visitation and closer YRS supervision and could also lead to easier transition back to the community at the end of the treatment cycle. With more than a third of the YRS cases needing programs in behavior management, Delaware should assess the feasibility of developing its own programming so it can address the treatment needs of this population within the state.

INDEPENDENCE AND CPRB VOLUNTEERS

The CPRB is a volunteer-based organization that makes independent reviews of the children in Delaware's foster care system and those in YRS placements. The number of hours devoted to these reviews is significant, but even more significant is the expertise given to assessing placements, plans, and outcomes.

During FY2006, the volunteer board members of the CPRB devoted 3,754 hours to training and reviews, all aimed at improving the lives of children in care and achieving successful outcomes for Delaware's youth. The 2006 Annual Meeting will include special service awards to honor those serving more than 10 years. These awards will recognize the work of

10 Years:

Mary Austria
Charles Carter
Mary Jane Johnson
Pam Meyer
Ann Southmayd
Candy Swetland

15 Years:

Caroline Bither
Sandra Lord
Judy Melman
Dana Stonesifer

20 Years:

Nancy Czeiner
Karla Jensen
Wilberta Lewis
Elaine Markell

25 Years:

Barbara Blair
Bonnie Maull

CPRB MEMBERS

New Castle 1

Robin Ryan*
Marion Gibbs
Linda Hartzel
Mary Morgan

New Castle 2

Nancy Czeiner*
Caroline Bither
Karla Jensen
Helen Willauer

New Castle 3

Barbara Williams*
Tina Light
Lillian McGowan
Bill Miller
Sunny Moon
Gertrude Shipp
Carol Stewart

New Castle 4

Jane Holloway*
Phyllis Faulkner
Jane Fox

New Castle 5

Jeanmarie Leonard*
Tanya Bell-Hynson
Bonita Herring
Lou Himelreich
Elma Jackson
Donna Roye-Morton

New Castle 6

Mary Jane Johnson*
Kellie Fresolone
Mildred Hamilton
Carolyn Karney
Elaine Markell

New Castle 8

Pamela Meyer*
Diane Bourne
Arlene Cronin
Judith Miller
Ann Southmayd

New Castle 9

Mary Field*
Vicky Kleinman
Susan Schneider

Kent 1

David Miller*
Kathleen Jamison
Bruce Morris
William Moyer
Rodney Smith

Kent 2

Gail Allen*
Charles Carter
Evelyn Figueroa
Wilberta Lewis
Denise Stokes
Candice Swetland

Kent 3

Mary Austria*
Ellen Holler
Lorraine Lovely
Catherine Mebane
Elizabeth Olsen
Dana Stonesifer

Kent/Sussex

Virginia VanSciver
Bonnie Maull
Ray Moore

Sussex 1

Louise Henry*
O.D. Basinski
Tiffany Derrickson
Martha Keller
Sandra Lord

Sussex 3

Stacia Girley*
Shirley Butler
Cora Norwood Selby
Deneen Smith
Marie Wallop

Executive

Committee

Bill Murray, Chair

Janice Baly
Barbara Blair
Ron Bythwood
Eleanor Kiesel
Don Schneck
Gail Allen ■
Carolyn Karney ■
Bonnie Maull ■
Pam Meyer ■
Virginia VanSciver ■

Deceased:

Fran Pullella

Leave of Absence:

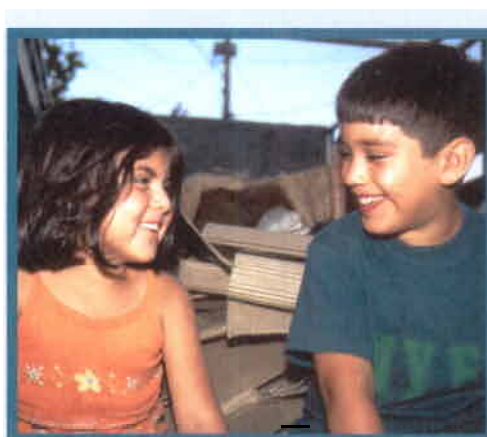
Florence Alburque
Jeff Davidson
Mary Lou Edgar
Sheri J. Morris

Resigned:

Eva Abbott
Christine Adams
Andrea Alston
Melissa Flynn
Barbara Freedman
Sylvia Galarza
Joan Herman
Laura Katz
Elaine M. Laudenslager
Iris M. McCarthy
Judy Melman
Patricia Mullen
Alice Rasmussen
Barbara Seth
Georgianne S. Sheehy
Yahna Talley
Marian Wilson

* Presiding Officer

■ General Member Elected to the Executive Committee.



The Child Placement Review Board furnishes the independent reviews that enhance the State's system for its children in care. The CPRB offers a constructive avenue by which citizens can monitor the provision of services to the State's most vulnerable children, improve their well-being through advocacy efforts, and focus public attention on the need for permanency and connection in their lives.

CPRB STAFF

Julia Pearce Executive Director

Linda Lampinen Review and Training Supervisor

Lisa Cookson, Denise Partridge, Nicole Reichard, Amy Wilburn Review Coordinators

Patricia Clarke and Nancy Ripple Support Staff